

**Town of Boscawen, NH
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Boscawen Municipal Complex**

**MEETING MINUTES - Final
Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM**

Commissioners Present: Tom Gilmore, Chair

Commissioner Absent: none

Alternate Commissioners Present: Norman LaPierre, Jeffrey Abbe

Others Present: Rose Fife, Recording Secretary, Alan Hardy. Planning & Community Development Director, John Keegan, AgCom Chairman

Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Norman LaPierre and Jeffrey Abbe will be voting members tonight.

Minutes:

A motion to accept the Minutes from the December 18, 2015 meeting was made by Norm LaPierre, seconded by Jeff Abbe and passed by a unanimous vote.

Regular Business

Chair & Vice Chair Nominations:

A motion to nominate Tom Gilmore as Chair and Jeff Abbe as Vice Chair was made by Tom Gilmore, seconded by Norm LaPierre and passed by a unanimous vote.

Elections being held at the May meeting was discussed.

Treasurer's Report:

Conservation Fund balance \$187,336.69 at year end. Forest Fund \$8,595.11. Paperwork will go out to update signature cards.

The By-Laws state that elections can be done at next meeting as long as it is noticed at this meeting. The officers shall be elected annually at the first meeting after town meeting. Jeff Abbe would be happy to have Mr. Saltmarsh be Vice Chair instead of himself if Mr. Saltmarsh became part of this group. More members need to be recruited.

Subcommittees were discussed. Tom Gilmore would like to be in charge of doing the walks on the conservation easements. Norm LaPierre stated that the Jones property on Goodhue Road needs to be walked. Alan Hardy would like to see those walks done. Norm LaPierre stated that he has walked that property before. It's not a large piece of land.

Old Business:

Town Forest: Jeff Abbe asked Alan Hardy if he had heard from Brian Adams. Alan Hardy said he had not, but it was posted in the News Vine that the trails were not allowed to be cut without authorized. Jeff Abbe said that

there has been very little cutting but rocks were moved and there have been some sticks across some entrances to keep people on the main trail. Alan Hardy's concern is if someone got hurt and it was on one of the Conservation's trails it could be a problem.

Norm LaPierre said that past Chairperson Deb Hinds was very adamant about having non-motorized mountain bikes being allowed to ride in the forest.

Norm LaPierre agreed to be a regular member. **A motion** to recommend Norm LaPierr and Jeff Abbe regular member to the Selectmen was made by Tom Gilmore, seconded by Norm LaPierre and passed by a unanimous vote.

Coldbrook Gravel:

A letter was sent out. Alan Hardy said that the commission's input modified some items that are required. The upper road will have to be abandoned. It will be an emergency only access. The road width up there is the actual wetland setbacks. The marking program delineating things is a great program that will be coming up. Limits of excavation will also be marked. Routine visits will take place to be sure everything is as it should be there. Alan Hardy suggested that after all the signs were put up the Commission should go up and walk the property. Jeff Abbe stated that the emergency access isn't mentioned in the finding. Alan Hardy said it would be shown on the plats. Jeff Abbe asked about the general operating conditions on the finding. Are they old? Alan Hardy said they are created by history. Jeff Abbe asked about the 40 floating days. Alan Hardy said that they have to close down the operation by November 1st. 40 floating days can be used before and after the start times. Norm LaPierre asked if they were allowed to continue sales. Alan Hardy said that they were, that only manufacturing is being regulated.

Bernier property purchase update: Jeff Abbe spoke with the property owner and she is in no hurry to make a decision on the sale right now.

New Business

John Keegan came before the Commission to ask for a Conservation Easement. He gave a history of his property which is located at 242 Corn Hill Road, also known as Lot 54 on map 45. In 1978 they purchased the back 90 of a development done in the 1970's. It is an 88.6 acre piece of property. It abuts The Woodman Lot of 110 acres. They would like a development easement. It would be a 200+ acre parcel of protected property. Their parcel is approximately 65 acres of woodland, 20 acres of wetland and marsh and the balance of 2 acre field and curtilage. They purchased the property in 1978 and built a passive solar home built from native lumber harvested from the property. Their objective in buying the property was to be good neighbors; do business locally and contribute to the betterment of their community. They do business locally, are good neighbors and contribute to the community. His wife Barbara was the town librarian for 17 years. They have been active in local government. They have worked with a number of agencies including the Cooperative Extension, the Soil Conservation, NH Agricultural Department and Fish and Game. They have sought to improve the forest land, eradicate invasives, improve access of the property, and protect the wild life, etc. They have done 4 selective cuts; one in 1978, one in 2000 and one in 2013. They have harvested over 400,000 board feet of timber and 200 cord of wood. In 2007 they contracted with a Forester to do a management plan. They became a certified tree farm the same year. They have been inspected twice; once from the National Tree Farm Office. Since 1980 they participated with the Fish and Game Safety Zone Program. Their property is open to hunting, trapping and non-vehicle use. They see many

kinds of wild life. They make maple syrup there. In 1992 they built a sugar house. They have done a 5 acre bio reserve that will be untouched. They would like to secure a conservation easement on their property. He showed the Commission a map from Fish and Game of the most recent wild life action plan.

Norm LaPierre asked if they have open land. John Keegan said they have 2 acres of land. They put in 10,000 s.f. of pollinator. The property is all in current use except 3 acres or so for the home.

Norm LaPierre asked Alan Hardy about the process of a Conservation Easement. Alan Hardy stated that developing the easement is intended to be one way. Once it is a Conservation Easement it stays that way. The Silver Farm was the last one done in Boscawen. First you create a value of the property and then subtract the value of the development rights. They would need to have someone go out and meet with John Keegan and walk the property and come back with a report and then go forward. Documents would be made out. There are other partners out there they may invest or have 'free money' to help the town purchase the easement. Once it gets to that point, then there is a public hearing. The Commission has to talk to the Board of Selectmen. Tom Gilmore asked John Keegan if that was what he wanted to do. John Keegan said it was. Norm LaPierre wanted to be sure they didn't want to sell development rights, they just wanted the conservation easement. John Keegan said yes, obtaining the easement would hinder any development rights. Tom Gilmore said it would be under the control of the Conservation Commission and needs to be walked once a year. John Keegan wants this to be made one parcel so the house goes with the property. They do not want it developed at all.

A motion to have Alan Hardy contact the appraiser was made by Tom Gilmore, seconded by Jeff Abbe and passed by a unanimous vote.

Jeff Abbe asked if when the appraisal comes back how that would change things. Alan Hardy said it does have an impact on the total asset value. Norm LaPierre asked if it were all one parcel now. John Keegan said it is all one parcel. He is just treating it in different ways. The deed is for the entire parcel.

John Keegan said this is the time of year to walk the property because it is accessible due to ice. Alan Hardy said he will have the appraiser contact John Keegan directly.

State of NH letter regarding Veteran's cemetery. Alan Hardy said that the staff there now is excellent stewards of the land. They are asking if the Conservation Commission has any comments on their proposed addition of columbariums. Alan Hardy said the question is if there something up there that is of interested to the Commission. Alan Hardy said that the property is part of the old State Forest. He has walked it. It is a beautiful piece of land. It's a level with a big sand bar out there. He doubted that there is a vernal pool on the property. Tom Gilmore asked how high above river is it? Alan Hardy said it may be up 30-40 feet. Norm LaPierre said there is no wetland up there that he can recall. Jeff Abbe has walked and driven through the property a few times and it is a beautiful job they've done. **A motion** that a letter of support be sent on this project and the Commission doesn't feel that anything further needs to be done by the commission was made by Jeff Abbe, seconded by Tom Gilmore and passed by a unanimous vote.

Jeff Abbe asked Alan Hardy if there would be exchange of money for the conservation easement that will affect John Keegan's property. Alan Hardy said yes. Jeff Abbe asked how the process worked. Alan Hardy also said he would search for matching money.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 pm was made by Norm LaPierre, seconded by Jeff Abbe and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next Meeting February 16, 2016 @ 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted by Rose Fife